

THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PERSONNELI. HIS POSITION IN THE AGENCY

1. The impending retirement of the present Director of Personnel and the appointment of his replacement makes it a most appropriate time to reevaluate the position in terms of the Agency's requirements and the functions the Personnel Director will be expected to perform. The Office of Personnel has been the target of constant criticism from all quarters ever since the Agency was organized. Some of the current criticisms are warranted, but others are unfair because there are basic deficiencies in the concept of the role of the Director of Personnel and a lack of understanding and agreement concerning his responsibilities, authority, and capability.

2. The problem is not unique to this Agency. Research conducted at Harvard University shows that management in industry is faced with the same problem and that there is no standard pattern or formula that can be applied. Each organization must resolve its own problem based on its particular needs and on its management philosophy. It is essential, however, to remove the doubt and confusion that exists among Operating Officials in our Agency by providing a tailored division of responsibility which will enable line and staff officers to know who does what in personnel administration. It is the purpose of this paper to offer suggestions and recommendations which will more clearly define the role of the Director of Personnel in CIA.

3. The first determination to be made and agreed upon by all concerned is the character of the position, that is, whether it should be staff, line or a combination of each. To aid in making this determination, the distinction between staff and line should be clarified. The purely staff position would require only that the Director of Personnel counsel the DCI, the Deputy Directors, and their subordinate supervisors on matters of policy and provide certain services such as the maintenance of personnel records, interpretation and application of Civil Service and other government regulations, and morale builders like recreation facilities and benefit programs. A truly line position would give to the Director of Personnel complete authority for all personnel actions and would remove from the supervisors some of their basic responsibilities. The single division of staff and line is not realistic.

4. A combination of both positions would give the Director of Personnel the staff responsibility for advice and guidance plus certain specific command responsibilities delegated by proper authority. This is fairly representative of the situation in the Agency today. The problems that have arisen stem from a lack of understanding and agreement on the extent of command responsibility assigned to the Director of Personnel and an unwillingness or inability on the part of line supervisors to discharge their basic responsibilities. To clarify the staff/line responsibilities requires a review of all of the functions involved in personnel administration to determine how they could best be performed and by whom.

II. FUNCTIONS OF PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

A. Policy Making

1. Policy making is basically the responsibility of the DCI since he decides the course the Agency will follow. It is obvious, however, that the Director is not in a position to personally initiate all policy, and suggestions for introducing or altering policies originate in many places. The Deputy Directors and their subordinate officers as well as the IG are responsible for many of them. In relatively minor matters, the Director of Personnel makes a policy decision or refers the matter to the DD/S who has been given certain authority to act for the DCI. Major policy suggestions are referred to the DCI, usually through the Deputy Directors or the Career Council. Some are submitted to the DDCI as well. When a policy suggestion results in an Agency regulation, it is subjected to the fantastic procedure of "concurrence" which permits wide and practically unrestricted use of veto power. In effect, the Deputy Directors and their Operating Officials make much of the personnel policy in the Agency. Thus, the policy making function is scattered.

2. The Director of Personnel as a specialist in personnel administration should be the principal source of personnel policy suggestions and his role in this respect must be clarified. Personnel policies are Agency-wide in effect and must be uniform and consistent. The Director of Personnel should have the principal voice and his advice and guidance on major issues must reach the Director undiluted and undistorted. Sufficient authority should be delegated to him to permit him to make minor policy decisions on his own. Under our present structure, this authority would be granted the DD/S. Its extent should be made perfectly clear to the other Deputy Directors.

B. Hiring

1. There appears to be little question that hiring is a function properly assigned to the Director of Personnel and that he should have decision-making authority for this purpose. Hiring includes recruiting, interviewing, clearance, testing, and record keeping. In actual practice, the Operating Officials are content to permit Office of Personnel to hire clerical and secretarial personnel and to comb the colleges and universities for suitable candidates, but in the higher brackets there is still a great deal of recruiting, if not actual hiring, being done by office and division chiefs.

2. Independent and uncontrolled recruitment is responsible for many of the marginal or unsatisfactory employees now carried on the Agency's rolls. It frequently results in selection by favoritism, on the basis of "who you know not what you know." Employment standards are lowered or become inconsistent and sometimes appear to be abandoned completely.

3. The Director of Personnel should know better than any individual supervisor the over-all needs of the Agency, the attrition rate, the unusual requirements, and the most desirable qualifications to fit a person for work in the intelligence field. The Operating Official knows best the immediate specific requirements of the jobs he wants to fill. It is his responsibility to make these requirements known to the Director of Personnel.

4. The recruiting staff provided the Director of Personnel should consist of members having a thorough knowledge of intelligence work in addition to knowledge of manpower sources of supply. Recruiters should be selected from operational and support components and not be limited to purely personnel work. The function of hiring should be performed exclusively by Office of Personnel.

C. Assignment and Reassignment

1. The initial assignment of a new employee is the single most important event in his career with the Agency. On it depends to a large degree the course his career will follow. If he has been properly assigned to a job for which he has the necessary qualifications of education, training, aptitude, and temperament he will be happy in his work. His morale will be high, his enthusiasm great, and he will give of his time and energy to the fullest extent. Given an improper assignment to begin with, particularly one too far above or below his capabilities or lacking in opportunity or purpose, will usually result in a disaffected employee who either stays on because he lacks initiative to move or becomes frustrated and quits. The Agency has lost many potentially valuable employees because of malassignment.

2. The Director of Personnel should be responsible for making initial assignments of new employees. The supervisor must be consulted and given an opportunity to interview the candidate. Whenever possible, he should be given a choice between several qualified candidates. The appointment should be made on a temporary basis pending a demonstration of the employee's fitness for the job. This need not be for the customary one-year trial period provided by Civil Service regulation. In fact, it should be for a considerably shorter period. Usually, it is possible to judge an employee's suitability within three months and only in exceptional circumstances is it necessary to evaluate a person's performance over a longer period of time. If the employee proves to be unsatisfactory, the supervisor should be privileged to turn him back to the Office of Personnel with a request for a replacement. It is not always possible to estimate a man's performance in advance of an actual assignment and a method of temporary test assignment will permit adjustments to be made before permanent harm is done to the employee and consequently to the Agency.

3. The supervisor assumes a major responsibility when he takes on a new employee. He must see to it that the new man is given a thorough indoctrination in the broad aspects of intelligence work as well as detailed instructions in the requirements of the specific job. He must give careful direction and guidance and provide the new employee with every opportunity to demonstrate his capability. Above all, the supervisor must evaluate objectively the potential of the new employee and not permit himself to be influenced, either favorably or unfavorably, by extraneous factors. Undue sympathy or compassion may lead to the unjustified continuation of the wrong man in the job to the detriment of both the man and the job. The proper utilization of manpower is a basic responsibility of the supervisor.

4. Reassignment presents a far more difficult problem. Normal reassignment actions for purposes of rotation between Headquarters and the Field or changes in assignments within a particular component are handled in a routine fashion and in a generally acceptable manner. The problems in reassignment usually occur when an employee (1) has outgrown his job and is

prevented from advancing because of the unavailability of suitable positions within his component, (2) was hired because of a special competence for which there no longer is a demand, (3) was assigned to a job for which he was inadequately qualified, (4) has incurred the displeasure of his supervisor for any reason whatever, or (5) simply becomes tired of what he is doing and wants a change. The unfortunate employee who finds himself in such a position can expect little or no assistance in obtaining a more suitable position. Within his own component, he can apply for and receive a release which entitles him to seek employment elsewhere in the Agency. He may then appeal to the Office of Personnel either directly or through the component's Administrative or Personnel Officer. The Office of Personnel will then go through the highly unsatisfactory "shopping" procedure which at the very least results in unfavorable publicity for the employee and frequently destroys any opportunity he had for reassignment. ("Shopping" is the circulating of official personnel jackets throughout the Agency in the hope that someone will develop an interest in the employee and offer him an assignment. This free circulation of official personnel jackets should be halted immediately. The control of personnel files should be tightened drastically. They should be released only to the Inspector General and the Office of Security when required in the course of inspection or investigation. The following procedure is suggested as being more productive of good personnel relations. Upon receipt of an application for reassignment the Office of Personnel should determine the type of work for which the employee is best qualified by examination of the record and personal interview. This determination having been made, it should be followed by a review of all suitable position vacancies. The employee should then be provided with a detailed resume of his history and activities and an objective evaluation of his performance. Interviews with selected supervisors should be arranged for the employee and, when deemed appropriate, participated in by the Personnel Officer. This procedure could be adopted immediately without waiting for concurrence in any other recommendations contained in this study.)

5. There is an almost complete absence of responsibility to accomplish reassignments in circumstances such as described above. Supervisors, Office of Personnel, Career Service Boards or Panels go through their feeble motions but in the end the employee finds he must shift for himself. He either finds his own job in the Agency or quits. This is an important factor contributing to the high attrition rate but even more important is the failure to properly utilize available, qualified manpower. The Director of Personnel should be authorized to make directed reassignments of qualified personnel when normal channels of reassignment are ineffective.

D. Promotion, Discipline, and Discharge

These functions are lumped together because they are a command responsibility of the line supervisors. Revised [] providing for competitive promotions is sound and should enable supervisors to exercise judgment and authority wisely. Discipline certainly is a command responsibility and senior supervisors should be able to exercise the power of separation for cause. Recognizing the rights, privileges and benefits of government employment, the Director of Personnel must perform a staff supervisory function in these areas. He should ensure that uniform and consistent practices are adhered to and advise proper command authorities in accepted procedures.

E. Wage Classification

This is definitely a function for which the Director of Personnel should have sole responsibility. He must keep up with wage scales in government and industry and be able to establish fair compensation rates for job requirements. Here again, uniformity and consistency throughout the Agency is of vital importance and cannot be achieved by Operating Officials.

F. Management Development

Management development requires the cooperative effort of both Operating Officials and the Director of Personnel but the latter should have principal responsibility and authority. The Operating Official identifies employees with capability and potential for management development and provides opportunities within his limitations. The Director of Personnel, however, should have the authority to carry the development further and to conduct a process of screening and selection on an Agency-wide basis.

G. Training

1. Training is an integral part of personnel administration and should not be treated as a function outside the scope of Director of Personnel responsibilities. We have previously recommended the ultimate merger of Office of Personnel and OTR and it remains a sound recommendation today. For the purpose of this paper, however, we will consider only the role of the Director of Personnel in training as such, without regard for the present organizational structure.

2. In all aspects of personnel administration, in hiring, placement, and proper manpower utilization, the individual's qualifications to fill a position are paramount. Training, particularly in this Agency, is essential to the full development of the required qualifications and the Director of Personnel must have a strong voice in determining the nature and extent of training given each individual.

3. Prior to the initial assignment of a new employee, the Director of Personnel should determine the extent of basic training required for the particular job. The supervisor then assumes responsibility for on-the-job training and for initiating further formal training when indicated. Other means of improving competence such as rotation and experience are the responsibility of the supervisor often working in conjunction with a Career Service Board. In all of these activities, the Director of Personnel has more than a passing interest. He should participate in a staff capacity in helping to work out training programs particularly of the long-range variety. He should take an active part in the screening of personnel for career development and be given the authority to move the career services program toward the achievement of its objectives.

H. Control

After personnel policies are established and an appropriate number of Agency regulations are published, one more element must be added--that of

control. This is the policing function which sees to it that the policies are carried out. It includes the examination and adjudication of complaints and grievances which are symptomatic of failure to follow already defined policies and procedures. This is more than a staff function and one which must be backed by high authority. It should be performed by the Director of Personnel acting through the DD/S, if necessary, and backed by DCI when the situation warrants it.

I. Welfare, Other "Morale Services"

1. Such services which are intended to improve the morale of Agency employees are definitely the responsibility of the Director of Personnel. These include the life and health insurance program, Credit Union, Aid Society and recreational programs. In these functions, he should exercise command authority under policies established by the DCI or DD/S.

2. Other services not included in this discussion are normal functions of Office of Personnel which are not questioned. These include job counseling, personal problems, in and out processing, etc.

III. Influencing Factors

1. There are a number of influencing factors which make the problem more complex and add to the difficulty of precisely defining the role of the Director of Personnel in CIA. Among these are security, the Career Services, personalities, compartmentalization, centralization vs. decentralization, and the size of the organization.

2. Security hampers recruiting by placing strict limitations on the extent to which Agency activities--that is, jobs--can be discussed. The length of time required for clearance also adversely affects recruiting. While the number of applicants rejected for security reasons is relatively small, it further reduces the number of prospective candidates available for duty. The SI clearance adds another hurdle and eliminates still more otherwise well-qualified employees. Technical interviews occasionally turn up individuals whose abnormal tendencies create joint medical-security-personnel problems. Infractions of security regulations and standards brings the Office of Security into the act over the heads of the Operating Officials as well as the Director of Personnel particularly when disciplinary action or dismissal are the result. The constant pressure of living and working with classified information affects the disposition and morale of Agency employees and sometimes creates serious personal problems. The responsibilities and authority of the Director of Security are not questioned here. The security factors are described only to illustrate how, within CIA, they impinge upon functions normally assigned to a personnel director in any other organization.

3. The Career Council and the Career Services were established by Agency Regulation [redacted] for the purpose of developing a career program to establish personnel management practices which will develop people to the fullest extent to meet present and anticipated personnel needs of the Agency. The policy stated in the regulation contemplates a progressive program that identifies, develops, effectively uses and rewards individuals who have qualifications required by the Agency; motivates them toward rendering maximum service to the Agency; and

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eliminates from the service, in an equitable manner, those who fail to perform as effective members of the Agency. This policy is to be implemented by the heads of Career Services and the several Boards and Panels. By this regulation, an entirely separate mechanism has been created to engage in personnel management. Whereas we were initially concerned with a clearer distinction between the functions of the Director of Personnel and Operating Officials we must now contend with a third factor which has been assigned personnel management responsibilities. It is true that the Director of Personnel is associated with the Career Service program as Chairman of the Career Council, but his influence in the Career Service Boards is little felt. The dispersion of responsibility for personnel management adds to the many problems of the Director of Personnel.

4. There is no problem area in the Agency which does not to some extent revolve around personalities. Sound organizational structures have been distorted to accommodate personalities. It is said with some measure of truth that "everyone in the Agency thinks he is an expert in personnel management." Extensive distortions of sound personnel management in this Agency have been caused by personalities. The absence of clearly defined, authoritatively assigned responsibilities of the Director of Personnel encourages the display of individual personality which serves only to add confusion to an already obscure situation.

5. Compartmentalization is a word highly revered in some parts of this Agency. Some regard it as the cornerstone upon which is built the Clandestine Services. To others it spells deliberate obstructionism and frustration. No effort will be made here to weigh the pros and cons. To anyone attempting to provide an adequate personnel service to the Agency, it means an artificial barrier has been erected which effectively prevents the close relationship between the line officers and the Director of Personnel essential to good personnel management. No other single factor has so successfully obstructed the development of sound personnel practices in this Agency.

6. Centralization vs. decentralization has been debated for many years. Simply stated centralization strives for a single unified CIA while decentralization advocates as a minimum the present organization of three semi-autonomous areas and hopes for further and wider separation of components for the future. The effect on the Director of Personnel can be stated in equally simple terms: centralization will require a greater concentration of responsibility in the Director of Personnel for personnel management in the Agency; decentralization will result in a complete dispersal of these responsibilities to individual components. Whichever is determined to be the best course for the Agency, it should be made clear to all concerned so that appropriate steps can be taken in that direction.

7. The size of the Agency has a bearing on the role of the Director of Personnel in its effect on the magnitude and complexity of the job. Relatively speaking, the Agency is small. Compared to Army units, it is about the size of an Infantry Division. Compared to international industrial and commercial enterprises, it would not even reach the level of medium size. Within the structure of U. S. Government organization, it is a unit of almost insignificant proportions containing considerably less than one per cent of the total number of government civilian employees. In this respect, the functions of a Director of Personnel described earlier in this report are not beyond the capabilities of a competent Director of Personnel.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to describe the major problems of personnel administration within the Agency and to suggest some means whereby such problems could be overcome. The single conclusion that can be drawn from this discussion is simply this: the respective responsibilities of the Director of Personnel and line supervisors must be clearly defined and authoritatively enunciated. Only by this means can the role of the Director of Personnel be established on a firm basis and progress be made toward better personnel administration in CIA.

It is recommended that:

- a. This paper be forwarded to the Career Council for further study.
- b. The Career Council be directed to produce for the signature of the DCI a statement of policy and specific implementing instructions which will clearly define the respective responsibilities of the Director of Personnel and line supervisors in the area of personnel administration.
- c. Such policy statement and implementing instructions be issued at the same time the newly appointed Director of Personnel assumes office.